

Returning to a Government Of, By, and For the People

Under the Trump Administration and a dysfunctional Republican-led Congress, Americans have grown further estranged from their own democracy. Americans believe their government is rigged against them. This belief undermines trust in government and impedes the ability to govern. It must be urgently addressed – not just with words – but with real action and bold reforms.

In 2016, Whip Hoyer delivered a speech at Georgetown University that addressed the loss of confidence in government and discussed ways Congress could restore the American people's faith that government can work effectively on their behalf. In a speech given today, Whip Hoyer built on the themes presented in 2016 and offered a vision for reforming government under a House Democratic Majority to make it more responsive, representative, and effective for the people it serves.

Here's a look at proposals from House Democrats for overhauling our campaign finance system, renewing Congress's oversight role, restoring voting rights, engaging in national redistricting reform, strengthening ethics standards, and modernizing government technology:

Returning to a government of the people:

- Build a fair election system by passing Rep. John Sarbanes' (MD-03) Government by the People Act
- Pass Rep. David Cicilline's (RI-01) DISCLOSE Act to limit dark money in elections and reveal who is donating to SuperPACs.
- Restore Congressional oversight and hold the executive branch accountable.

Returning to a government by the people:

- Restore and strengthen the Voting Rights Act by passing Rep. Terri Sewell's (AL-07) Voting Rights Advancement Act to protect Americans from discriminatory voting practices.
- Make it easier for Americans to vote by passing Rep. John Lewis' (GA-05) Voter Empowerment Act and making voter registration automatic through legislation sponsored by Rep. Bob Brady (PA-01).
- Strengthen the Election Assistance Commission established by the Help America Vote Act of 2002.
- Secure our elections by passing Homeland Security Committee Ranking Member Rep. Bennie Thompson's (MS-02) Election Security Act to provide assistance to election administrators to protect voting infrastructure and ensure the DNI conducts regular threat assessments.
- Enact national redistricting reform, an effort being led by Rep. Zoe Lofgren (CA-19) and Rep. Jim Cooper (TN-05).
- Strengthen ethics standards for those in public office by banning Members of Congress from sitting on corporate boards while in office; requiring Members to post financial disclosures on their official websites; and strengthening the Office of Congressional Ethics.

Returning to a government for the people:

- Return to regular order to provide transparency and give Members and the public real input in the legislative process.
- Reform House rules to make Congress more open and empower Members.
- Give Members greater say in how taxpayer dollars are spent in their districts.
- Modernize government technology to improve the way Americans interact with Members and government agencies.

Campaign finance reform, voting reform, and ethics reform, alongside new rules to improve how Congress works – all of these items should be packaged into one reform bill and addressed in the opening days of the next Congress, should Democrats be entrusted with the House Majority.

Office of Democratic Whip Steny H. Hoyer, 9/12/2018